

**St. Lawrence River Research and Education Fund**  
**Grant Final Report**

Name of organization reporting: **Save The River**

Progress Report Dates: from: **August 2013 to October 2013**

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Project/Program Name: **Save The River's Riverkeeper Monitoring Program**

Amount of Grant: **\$4,884.00**

Purpose of Grant: **To expand the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program to reach interested community members in St. Lawrence County.**

Have there been any changes to your organization's IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status since you were awarded this grant? **No**

**I hereby certify that the above and attached statements are true and accurate.**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Kate Breheny, Program Manager

9/30/13

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **FINAL REPORT NARRATIVE**

### **I. Introduction**

Save The River's Riverkeeper Monitoring Program is a thriving volunteer monitoring program that teaches volunteers the basics of using qualitative data to assess the health of the St. Lawrence River (referred to as the River throughout) while they are out paddling, walking, swimming or boating. By training individual volunteers how to notice subtle changes in the River ecosystem they are taught to identify problems that impact water quality, track down sources of pollution and effectively report these problems properly. As a result of the volunteer's work, Save The River is better able to assess and advocate for the health of the River.

The goal of this grant is to expand our Riverkeeper Monitoring Program into St. Lawrence County, and to increase the knowledge and awareness of volunteers up and down the River about the natural environment of the River and how they can protect it. Over the course of the year staff trained 4 new and 5 returning Master Trainers in the Riverkeeper curriculum, trained 439 volunteers from Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties as well as Ontario, and created an on-line reporting system to enable Riverkeeper Volunteers to report their observations easily and efficiently – allowing Save The River to more accurately report observations to the appropriate agencies and municipalities. Save The River is pleased to report this year the goal of expanding the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program to reach interested community members downriver into St. Lawrence County has been met and 39 St. Lawrence County residents are now Riverkeeper Monitoring Volunteers. Below are the results of Save The River's work on the project this year.

### **II. Methods**

Save The River identified several objectives and key activities for this grant to aid in the overall expansion of the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program. Objectives included expanding the program down river into St. Lawrence County, training at least two volunteers to give the Riverkeeper Training Presentation, training at least 120 new volunteers to the program and creating an online process to facilitate volunteer reporting of potential issues. Success in achieving these objectives has been met through the following activities:

- Save The River staff worked with organizations throughout the region and held a Riverkeeper training in the town of Hammond at the Chippewa Yacht Club and Chippewa Fish & Game Club in St. Lawrence County.
- Save The River trained 4 new volunteers as Master Trainers and updated information for the 5 returning Master Trainers. A training session was held to introduce the manual and presentation to the participating Master Trainers as well as give presentation tips and notes to prepare trainers for presentation giving.
- Master Trainer binders containing information on relevant issues and species were created for the 4 new trainers and updated materials were given to returning trainers.
- To meet the goal of an additional 120 volunteers to the program, Save The River scheduled 14 training sessions with the following local organizations: in Jefferson County, at the Cape Vincent Public Library, Minna Anthony Nature Center, Antique Boat Museum, Save The

River office and, in St. Lawrence County in the town of Hammond at the Chippewa Yacht Club and Chippewa Fish and Game Club and in Ontario, at the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network.

- All trainees from the 2013 season thus far have been outfitted with Save The River's Volunteer t-shirt as well as the Riverkeeper Identification Guidebook.
- Save The River worked with its web developer to create a new on-line, smart-phone friendly submission offering Riverkeeper volunteers additional options for reporting incidents.

### **III. Results**

Through the hard work of staff and Master Trainer volunteers our final results indicate that Save The River has met and exceeded the objectives for the 2013 grant year. This summer 4 new Master Trainer volunteers were trained, increasing Save The River's staff capacity for how many trainings would be provided in 2013 beyond the initial expectation. This increase in the number of trainers allowed us to exceed our number of trainings and participants trained for the season. At fourteen training sessions 439 volunteers were trained, far beyond the anticipated 120 volunteers, bringing the total number of trained Riverkeepers to 633. This number includes both new and returning volunteers seeking refresher training.

Furthermore, as a result of offering the Riverkeeper Training to teachers who participated in Save The River's *In the Schools* education program, Save The River was able to provide Riverkeeper Training to 319 students in grades 5 through High School. This unexpected, yet welcomed outcome has been a positive enhancement for students whose teachers work with Save The River in developing meaningful River related curriculum. As a result these students are more aware of their environment and are more engaged in its protection. This success has provided Save The River a window of opportunity to expand the Riverkeeper Training in a new direction.

Reporting and evaluation are important to the success of the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program. At the end of the season, feedback from Master Trainers was received and evaluation forms were reviewed. Master Trainers offered their feedback about their experiences with the program. All Master Trainer volunteers felt that they were well prepared because of the depth of the curriculum presented to them and the time staff spent preparing them for the trainings. Evaluations returned from volunteers attending the trainings gave unanimously positive evaluations of the Master Trainers abilities to teach and share knowledge. Also this fall volunteer evaluations were assessed to determine the effectiveness of the trainings. Through these evaluations Save The River learned training participants' expectations were met, they were provided with sufficient information, and the materials were helpful. This feedback will enable further expansion of the Riverkeeper Program to meet needs of both volunteers as well as Save The River.

Over 90% of reports turned into Save The River by Riverkeeper volunteers provided relevant/actionable information about the River's health. Reports included information on wildlife die-offs, local pollution and run-off issues, and spread of aquatic invasive species. For example this summer River communities observed several stands of Eurasian milfoil

found in several bays and creeks in Goose Bay and Waddington, NY. With the help from Riverkeeper volunteers, information was passed on to our partners at SLELO –PRISM and DEC, where this information is critical to their inventory of this aquatic invasive plant.

Save The River is extremely pleased to have the online reporting form design work completed and now available on its website at [report.savetheriver.org](http://report.savetheriver.org) having gone live on September 30<sup>th</sup>, for volunteers to use to make reports on River health observations. Throughout the calendar year Save The River staff will monitor the online forms usage, begin to educate volunteers about how to use the form, and then do heavy promotion of the online reporting option for the 2014 spring and summer season. As a result, next year Save The River will have the ability to receive reports via multiple avenues.

#### **IV. Budget**

\$4,884 was granted for the completion of this project. To date the complete amount granted has been spent. A break down of expenditures can be seen below in Table 1. Included in this budget are the additional matching dollars that were outlined in the original grant application. As illustrated in the budget report table, the cost of the portable projector screen was less than budgeted (\$41) as were the volunteer t-shirts (\$25). Therefore, the funds for supply and equipment support was used to support the additional expenses incurred in the Master Trainer Curriculum materials (\$66) as that expense was higher than expected due to the overwhelming interest in returning and new Master Trainers and subsequent increased need for additional materials. Save The River has completed the major projects for this grant within the original budget outlined for the project.

#### **V. Conclusions**

Save The River has met the goals of this grant prior to the end of the granting year. Through the support of the St. Lawrence River Research and Education Fund, Save The River has greatly increased its Riverkeeper Monitoring Program. The Riverkeeper Reporting Form is live online and ready for use, Master Trainers are prepared for future trainings and Save The River has provided previously trained volunteers with meaningful workshops to extend their River knowledge and keep them engaged in the program. In addition, Save The River added 439 volunteers to the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program, substantially growing its network of “eyes and ears” on the River.

Save The River’s Riverkeeper Monitoring Program strives to educate the River community about River issues as well as empower volunteers to watch out for the overall health of the St. Lawrence River. Support from the St. Lawrence River Research and Education Fund has made it possible for Save The River to train volunteers up and down the River and increase the knowledge and importance of the St. Lawrence River and its protection in our River communities. By expanding the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program Save The River has been able to grow its capacity to educate interested individuals and families who share a mutual love and interest in the St. Lawrence River.

**Table 1. Save The River SLRREF 2013 Final Expenditures**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo</b>	<b>Budgeted Amount</b>	<b>SLRREF Funded Amount</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
Funds Awarded	3/24	Riverkeeper Monitoring Program					\$4,884
Revenue Received	5/1	New York Power Authority 1 of 3					\$1,628
	8/28	New York Power Authority 2 of 3					\$1,628
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
Salary & Benefits		Program Manager		\$11,867		\$11,867	\$11,867
		Executive Director		\$872		\$872	\$872
Contractor	5/1	Web Design for Incident Concern Form	Development of online form deposit		\$500		\$500
	8/28		Online Form Development	\$2,200	\$1,250	\$113	\$1,363
Equipment	6/28	Train the Trainer Curr. Materials	binders, index tabs, printing	\$40	\$106	\$14	\$120
	8/9	Portable Projector	Epson portable projector	\$299	\$299	\$148	\$447
	8/9	Portable Laptop	iPad (to replace laptop)	\$550	\$550	\$48	\$598
	8/9	Portable Projector Screen	Epson projector screen	\$150	\$109		\$109
	5/10	Volunteer Identifying T-shirts	Victory Promotions	\$1,845	\$1,820		\$1,820
		Consumable Office Supplies		\$250	\$250		\$250
Other		Mileage		\$352	\$0	\$55	\$55
		Volunteer Recognition		\$800	\$0	\$800	\$800
		Overhead		\$900	\$0	\$900	\$900
<b>Subtotal</b>				\$20,125	\$4,884	\$14,817	\$19,701
<b>Total Project Budget</b>							\$19,701
<b>Matching Funds</b>						\$14,817	
<b>SLRREF Contribution</b>					\$4,884		